

Dress and Ornament of Mithilā

S. N. Sahay

Mithilā or Videha (formerly a part of Viji or Vajjī confederacy) was bounded by the Kausikī or Kosi river on the east, by the Sadānirā or Gandakī on the west, by the Gāṅgā on the south and by the Himālayas on the north. This area is represented to-day by the districts of Muzaffarpur, Valahi, Darbhanga, Samastipur, Champaran, Saharsa, north Bhagalpur and parts of Monghyr and Purnea districts.¹ Mithilā has given an unbroken continuity of life and pattern of culture since time immemorial, and as such it has a long historical tradition. The security and seclusion on account of its geographical features are responsible for the evolution of a somewhat characteristic culture popularly known as 'Mithilā Culture.'

The earliest reference to Mithilā is found in the *Śatapatha Brāhmana* where its ancient boundary is mentioned.² The Epics and the Purāṇas also contain numerous references to this kingdom. In the Vedic texts, reference has been made to Janaka, the great philosopher king of Videha and contemporary of Yājñavalkya, Uddālaka and Āruṇi.³ Videha is frequently mentioned in the Buddhist literature. But a continuous history of this kingdom is lacking from the Mauryan period when it became a part of the Magadha Kingdom. It was prosperous even in the Śuṅga period but very little is known about this country in the Kūṣāṇa period. However, it appears to have regained its popularity in the Gupta and Pāla periods. It came under the Karmāṭas of Mithilā between 1037 A. D. and 1325 A. D. Thereafter, between 1325 A. D. and 1525 A. D. it was ruled over by the Oinwāras.⁴ Its glory and fame continued even in the

1 For details see Upendra Thakur, *History of Mithilā*, chap. 1.

2 Mithra Jayakanta, *A History of Mithilā Literature*, vol. I, p. 1; U. Thakur, *op. cit.*

3 Roy Choudhury, H. C., *Political History of Ancient India*, p. 44.

4 For details see U. Thakur, *chaps. 4-VI.*

medieval and modern periods of Indian history. Even now it is one of the richest and prosperous regions of the State of Bihar. It has given birth to eminent philosophers and poets. Sir George Abraham Grierson has, therefore, rightly observed about Mithila that "traditions could grow unimpaired and the literary pursuits in different directions continued unabated through the ages." A rich cultural heritage and a sound political background, therefore, helped very much to the people of Mithila in maintaining a distinct individuality in the nature and style of dress and ornament.

It is very difficult to say about the exact area and name of Videha or Mithila region in the pre-historic times. But if we include Bhagalpur and Monghyr in this region then on the basis of the pre-historic finds discovered from these areas (particularly from Holmehariff and Khayaspur in the district of Monghyr and Son Chhap in the district of Bhagalpur), it may be suggested that probably the pre-historic people also lived in this region. According to Sanku Kumar Chatterjee, it was inhabited by the Khasias who are referred to in the Mahabharata. But we do not get any evidence of these people in the present Darbhanga and Vaishali districts which are regarded as the epicentre of the Mithila culture. The antiquities also discovered from other parts of the Mithila region do not throw any light on the dress and ornaments worn by the pre-historic people of this region. It is just possible that they might not have been using any dress and ornaments like the pre-historic people of other areas. The terracotta female figurine representing mother goddess from Chhap (Bhagalpur) does not show the use of dress and ornament and as such it strengthens the above theory that no dress was worn by them. Even then the possibility of the use of bark garments by the people of this period cannot be ruled out as there are numerous references to the use of bark garments in the literature of the later periods of this region which may point out to a long tradition of the use of this particular garment.

The name of Videha (Mithila), no doubt is referred to in many places in the Vedic literature but there is no specific mention of the dress and ornament worn by the people of this area. Probably Yājñavalkya belonged to Videha but even he does not mention about the dress and ornament of this

1. Roy Chaudhary, P. C., *Pat. Gar., Darbhanga*, p. 24.

region. However, there are numerous references in the Vedic literature to the use of dress and ornaments by the people of north-eastern India and as Mithila was a part of it, quite likely similar dress and ornament were also worn by the people of this region.

In the Vedic period *vastra*,⁶ *śtra*⁷ and *vastra*⁸ were the common terms used for clothes. The *pāṇi* had usually one *śtri* and it was always tied or girt which implied tucks and knots. It covered only lower part of the body. The upper part of the body was, however, covered by the another garment which was either a wrapper (*uttarīya*) or a jacket, or a bodice or chuk-like garment.⁹ Sometimes an over garment called *adhinā*¹⁰ was also used by the prince. For denoting special types of garments we get terms such as *śroṇi*¹¹ (gold embroidered vest), *śroṇi*¹² (gold embroidered cloth with artistic and intricate designs). *Pratidhi* (breast cover or a part of bride's attire made up of one or two stripes of cloth drawn across or crosswise on the bust and tied at the back). In the Mithila region even now men wear *dholl* and *dupgā* while women wear *ari* and bodice or breast-cover as upper and lower garments. The aristocratic people, however, wear embroidered coat and dyed garments on special occasions. Thus we find continuity of the Vedic tradition in Mithila particularly in respect of dress and ornament. The term *agṛya*¹³ occurs in the *Rajurveda*, the *Atharvaveda*, the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Puṣkaminia Brāhmaṇa* in connection with the *vrātya* and kings, whose *agṛya* was as bright as day. According to the *Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra*¹⁴ the *agṛya* was tied with a tilt and cross winding, but the kings on the occasion of sacrifice tied it in a special manner; the ends were gathered together and tucked away in front so as to

6 A. V., V. 17; IX. 5, 25; XII. 3, 31.

7 At. Br., I. 3.

8 Chā. Up., VIII. 1.5; Kṛ. Up., II. 15.

9 Meisander, *Ceremonial, Textile, Jewellery and Cosmetics*, p. 1.

10 R. V., I. 140; K. 5, 4.

11 At. V. 165, 10; L. 25, 12; A. V., XII. 1, 1.

12 A. V., IV. 30, 7; R. V., II. 1, 6; A. V., XIV. 1, 7.

13 A. V., XV. 1, 1; Sat. Br. III. 3, 2, 3; Puṣk. Br., XII. 14.

14 Kṛ. Br., XXI. 4.

cover them up. Probably the head-dress was put upon by women but at one place *śatras* has been described as wearing *ayāṇa*.¹⁵ Even now the head-dress called *ājra* is very popular among the people of Mithila which may indicate that still they are maintaining the old tradition, only some change has taken place in the name and mode of wearing it. Further, *Śikhaśāstra*, (*Upaśāstra*) which is said to have been composed in Mithila informs us that the clothes were dyed in different colours such as yellow, scarlet, red etc.¹⁶

In the Vedic period we get references to various kinds of clothing materials such as wool, silk, goat skin etc.¹⁷ but cotton is not mentioned. The clothes manufactured out of these materials are mentioned by the terms *śatras*, *darśa* or *śara*, *śaśra*, *śāśra*, *śāśra*, *śāśra*, *śāśra* and *śāśra*. Among these *śatras* was manufactured from the fibres of the tree growing in the north-western and sub-Himalayan regions. This may correspond to *śatras* mentioned in the folk songs and literature of Mithila. *Kāśra* was a variety of silk cloth and it also occurs in the literature of Mithila.¹⁸ Further, Bhagalpur is still an important centre where silk is produced in huge quantity though it is not like the silk of Kāśi. *Tārya*¹⁹ is explained as modern *śatras* or rough silk of Bihar by S. C. Sarkar.²⁰ The commentary on the Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,²¹ however, describe it as a linen garment. Whatever material may have been employed in manufacturing, it is a different question but it may be pointed out in this connection that in the Mithila region *śatras* and *śara* are manufactured even now and they resemble very much with the silk or linen. The *śatras* of Bhagalpur is still very popular. Therefore, it may be suggested that this variety was manufactured in Mithila even in the Vedic times and it is continuing to the present day.

The Vedic people also used various types of ornaments and it seems that there was practically no difference in the male and female ornaments. The

15 Śat. Br. V, 3, 1, 21.

16 Comp. Stud. of Ind. vol. 1, pt. 1, p. 270 (Ed. Globe, B. P.).

17 R. V., VII, 67, 3; A. V., XIV, 2, 5; R. V., 1, 16, 5, 10; Śat. Br. III, 9, 1, 12.

18 P. A., p. 21.

19 A. P., XVII, 4, 21. (probably *Āśra* Veda was also composed in Mithila.)

20 Sarkar, S. C., Some Aspects of Eastern Social History of India, p. 30, footnote 53.

21 Festschrift, p. 208 (foot note 3).

ornaments were worn on the neck, the ears, the head, the hands, and the waist. *Nishagrika* and *ratna* were the neck ornaments, *larga-sreela* was ear-ornament, *bidharika* and *parilanka* were hand ornaments, *mekhala* and *radant* were waist ornaments while *lajja* was head ornament.²² If *Ashvarya Veda* is taken to be as a work of the Mithila region then it may be suggested that these ornaments were worn by the people of Mithila in the Vedic period.

The *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* contain numerous references to *Vidha* or Mithila. Still, the main female character of the *Rāmāyana* belonged to *Vidha*. She was the daughter of *Janaka*, the king of Mithila. The *Rāmāyana*, therefore, furnishes valuable information about the dress and ornaments of the people of Mithila region. It seems that the types of dresses worn by the Vedic people continued in this period. Generally two garments, one for the upper part and the other for the lower part of the body were worn by men and women and they were called *uttaranga* and *stari*. Sometimes embroidered net called *adhinata* was worn by rich persons while bolles and breast cover were used by noble ladies.

In the *Rāmāyana* the term *kapota* is noticed which denoted some kind of silk garment. King *Janaka*'s marriage dowry to his daughter included *Mantra*, silk or linen garments and ordinary cloth.²³ *Sita* wore *laukya* (a variety of silk) in the royal palace of *Ayodhya*²⁴. Further, she has been described as wearing *phala-laukya*²⁵ (another variety of silk) as *Pāñchajanya* kurti. In the *Artha Samudhaya* Brand has recorded her wearing an yellowish silk garment. Thus it may be inferred that *Sita* was very fond of yellow silk garment and that there must have been a flourishing silk industry during the period in the Mithila region, the place to which she belonged. Even now the silk garment is liked very much by the ladies of the aristocratic families of Mithila. Moreover, the terms *laukya* and *kapota* referred to in the literature of Mithila confirm the continuity of the use of these garments.

²² A. P. L. 111, 14, I, 166, 10; V. 19, 1, A. P., VI, 81, I, 1, VI, 133, I, VIII, 4, 3.

²³ *Rām. Bhā.* 14th *Sarg*.

²⁴ *Rām. Ayodhya* 37th *Sarg*.

²⁵ *Rām. Aranya* 47th, 52nd and 60th *Sarg*.

The *Ramayana* also contains references to the use of various types of ornaments by men and women. The ornaments were worn on the neck, the ears, the hands, the fingers, the waist and the ankles. The neck ornaments were called *kausha-hara*, *lakshmanakāśa*, *Arundhara* and *chandrahara*.²⁶ The ear-ornaments were called *kapota* and *aridrapa*.²⁷ The hand ornaments were known by the terms *valaya* and *bandhaya*.²⁸ The finger ornaments were called *abharitayaka*.²⁹ The waist ornament was, however, known by the terms *karshakāśa*, *harita-mala* and *malakāśa*³⁰ while *padara*³¹ was an ornament for the ankles and the feet. The different terms mentioned for one ornament probably denote different designs and types. Most of these terms are used in *Mithila* for various types of ornaments.

The excavations conducted in the *Mithila* region although do not throw sufficient light on the material culture and life of the people of this area, yet the great variety of P. G. ware found at *Valmiki* may indicate that even in the Epic period it was a place of glory and on this basis it may be suggested that the ornaments and dress referred to in the Epic literature were worn by the people of this area as well.

It is almost an accepted fact that *Mithila* was the seat of the Jainism and the Buddhism. Mahaveer was born at *Kumharanagarāma*, a village in *Mithila* and he spent as many as six seasons there. The two other Tirthankaras, *Amaladeva* and *Amalindadeva* also were born in this region and attained supreme knowledge. Lord Buddha visited *Valmiki* thrice in his life time. Therefore the Buddhist and the Jaina literature contain numerous references to the material culture of the people of *Mithila*, but it is very surprising that they do not give any specific account of the dress and ornaments worn by the people of this region. However, it seems that spinning and weaving were well known to the people of this period. The threads were spun and woven

26 *Ram. Kp.* 9th Sarga, 11th Sarga; *Sua.* 9th Sarga; *Laksh.* 63th Sarga.

27 *Ram. Kp.* 10th Sarga; *Sua.* 12th Sarga.

28 *Ram. Kp.* 32nd Sarga, *Sua.* 9th Sarga.

29 *Ram. Kp.* 9th Sarga.

30 *Ram. Kp.* 9th Sarga, *Sua.* 7th Sarga, *Arundhara*, 32nd Sarga.

31 *Ram. Kp.* 9th Sarga.

used textile fibres like linen, cotton, silk and hemp (*Jam*).¹² Hemp is produced in Purnea district of Bihar which was formerly in the Mithila region. We get references to weavers, their loom and the weaving appliances.¹³ The Buddhist literature refers to finished textile goods of different varieties.¹⁴ Most of these varieties of textile fibres are still manufactured in and around the Mithila region. In the *Mahajanaka Jataka* cotton, silk, linen and kashibara are mentioned,¹⁵ while in another *Jataka* women are described as producing very fine quality of thread and making a ball of it.¹⁶ A survey of the life and culture of the people of Mithila reveals that women of Madhubani and Gopabandha still produce very fine quality of thread and they make a ball out of it. Thus it may be inferred that there was a flourishing textile industry in this region in the Buddhist period and it is still surviving in this area. *Jataka* further informs us that the cloth of *Kiri*¹⁷ was very popular in this region and people used it on special occasions. The *Mahabagga* mentions that Buddha allowed the use of prayers (a silken shawl) by the monks. *Kyama* (linen) was also very popular and is mentioned as one of the cloths for making cloths of the Buddhist.¹⁸ Further it mentions about the manufacture of *Ushara*. Such industries are also functioning in the district of Purnea which once formed a part of Videha territory. Now the blanket weaving is being carried on by small colonies of *gajaria*.¹⁹ In the Buddhist literature there are also references to *brahmana* which was either woolen or bark cloth²⁰. *Takshila* was another variety of woolen cloth and it was sent by *Jihata* (the king of Magadha) to *Pradyota* (the king of Kosala) in the 6th century B. C.²¹ The *Mahabagga*

¹² Agrawala, Y. S., *India as Known to Pagan*, pp. 123-26.

¹³ *Purana*, II, 135; D., N. L. 51; III, I, 356, IV, 475.

¹⁴ *M. P.* V, 101; *CS*, IV, 1, 18; *M.*, VI, 1, 16; *Jm.* V, 327.

¹⁵ *Mahajanaka Jm.* VI, 47.

¹⁶ *Jataka* VI, 336.

¹⁷ *M. N.*, II, 1-7.

¹⁸ *M. P.*, VIII, 1, 34, VII, 3, 1.

¹⁹ Roy Choudhury, P. C., *Dist. Hist. Purnea*, p. 249.

²⁰ *Mahabagga Jm.*, VI, 47.

²¹ Kutilchandra, *Customs, Textiles, Culture*, p. 12.

mentions that cloth was also manufactured from hemp or *Janas*⁴¹ while the *Jātaka*⁴² refers to the use of *gāṇa* (animal skin) as clothing material. Hemp or *Janas* may have been produced in Purnea (part of Vīśāha territory) even in the Buddhist period and that some kinds of cloth were manufactured from it in this region. Further, we get references to the use of coloured and embroidered garments by the rich persons and garments with long borders, cut borders and unbordered borders by common people⁴³. *Kāṭakaka* or bodice was worn by noble ladies. There was very little difference in the dress of monks and nuns. It consisted of three garments namely *saṃghaṭṭi*, *anāradāka*, *āṭṭhāṇḍi*. Sometimes they used to cover the entire body with one sweep of the garment. Their garments were dyed in yellow colour⁴⁴. The nuns were allowed to wear bodice or *kaṭakaka*. The *Chāṭṭaṅga*⁴⁵ says that *ghaṇḍa* was also used by women, which was something like a loin cloth. Some *Jāṇas* refer to the use of even *śīṭ* which was called *sappā*⁴⁶. It was, however, worn by the prince and the queen. The *Mahāparinibbāṇasutta*⁴⁷ informs us that women of Vaiśālī decked themselves in matching colours when they learnt of the visit of Lord Buddha at the residence of *Ānāpāl*. Thus people of Mithilā wore different types of dresses on different occasions in the Buddhist period. The head-dress must have been an important item of male attire but there is very little mention about it in the literature of this period.

The jeweller (*soṇḍhara*)⁴⁸ and ornaments of gold are frequently mentioned in the Buddhist literature. The ornaments were used by both men and women. There were neck-ornaments of various types, ear-ornaments, head-ornaments, nose-ornament, hand ornaments, waist ornaments and leg ornaments. The head ornament was called *kīṇḍa*,⁴⁹ the ear ornament was called

41 M. F., VIII, 13, 1.

42 Jan., VI, 300.

43 M. F., VIII, 29, 1.

44 M. F., VIII, 13.

45 Chāṭṭaṅga, 10 a.

46 Jan., 3, 33, 324, 431.

47 Mahāparinibbāṇa, p. 54.

48 Kapila Jan., 536, Pāṇini Jan., 543.

49 Jan., 311.

kapala,⁵¹ the neck ornaments were known by the terms *stha*, *vanadama* and *manjira paitiya*,⁵² the nose ornament was called *unaka*,⁵³ the hand ornaments were *zaya* and *layara*,⁵⁴ the waist ornaments were *mekhala* and *ghagomala*⁵⁵ while the leg ornaments were called *kikkira*, *palipala* and *udghaffana*.⁵⁶ It is interesting to note in this connection that some of the ornaments used by the people of Mithila are even now known by the same terms. This is proved particularly by the folk songs of Mithila. Moreover, Mithila, Vaishali, Champā, Pataliputra and Rajagṛha were regarded as prosperous cities and centres of industries and trade in the Buddhist and post-Buddhist periods.⁵⁷ There were weavers and goldsmiths who were manufacturing various types of cloth and ornaments, most probably for the use of the people of these regions.

The *Arthashastra* of Kautilya and the accounts of Megasthenes undoubtedly throw light on the dress and ornament worn by the people of northern India in the Mauryan period, but nothing concrete is recorded about the people of Mithila. However, inferences may be drawn by comparing the dress and ornaments referred to in these accounts with the current practices, customs and available literature of Mithila. Further, the terracotta, beads, amulets and ornaments discovered from the recent excavations at Vaishali, Nandana garh, Dolirajgarh, Navalagarh and Jainanagaragarh throw much light on the dress and ornament worn by the people of these areas in the Mauryan period.

Kautilya refers to various types of cloths like woollen, silk, cotton and bark. They were manufactured under the supervision of *Sitradhikarya*, the superintendent of weaving. The weaving of yarn was done by women of respectable families, widows, crippled women, mother of royal courtesans and old temple-maids.⁵⁸ Further, coloured and dyed garments were also produced. Even

51 *Jm.* 542, 543.

52 *Jm.* 547.

53 *Ibid.*

54 *Jm.* 506, 533.

55 *Jm.* 526, 531, 547.

56 *Jm.* 503, 547.

57 *Sinha, B. P., Comp. Hist. of Bihar*, vol. I, pt. I, p. 287. (*Ibid.*)

58 *K. A. I.* 23.

these days in Mithilā, the cotton and silk threads are spun by ladies of respectable families, widows and poor women. They have adopted it as a part of their daily life as well as their main occupation. Kaustilya refers to different varieties of cloths such as *kṣama*, *śatula*, *karpāsa*, *lana*, *karṣya*, *patarga* and *cinapatta*.⁵⁹ *Kṣama* was either cotton or silk cloth. *Śatula* was a linen cloth from Bengal or a kind of cloth made up of the bark of *śatula* tree. *Karpāsa* was cotton cloth while *patarga*, *karṣya* and *cinapatta* were different types of silk cloths. The best variety of *patarga* was produced in Magadhā, *pūṣṭi*, and *śatrasāṅghya* (Bengal).⁶⁰ It has been identified with *ari*, *maṅgi* or *maṇḍi* silk.⁶¹ This variety of cloth is still manufactured in the Mithilā or Tirhut region and they are regarded as valuable cloth. They are worn on special occasions. By this time most of the parts of Videha or Mithilā had come under the control of Magadhā kingdom, and as such it is quite likely that even the Mauryan period or Kaustilya's time it was produced in Mithilā. *Sau* or *haṇṇa* was woven into ropes, saucers cloth or bags. It was spun in *oṃpāsa* mostly by women. As already noted above *lana* is produced mainly in the Furruck district and different varieties of cloths are manufactured out of it in and around this region. In ancient times it was a part of Mithilā and as such even in the Kaustilya's time it may have been produced in this area. *Cinapatta* was a variety of silk manufactured in China. It was popular among the people of Mithilā.

It seems that *dhottī*-like lower garment and *śatāṅga* were worn by male persons while *śatī*-like lower garment was worn by females. The young girls wore *śatī* or *gāṅgā*. According to Megasthenes⁶² "the Indians wear an under garment of cotton which reaches below the knee half way down the ankle and also an upper garment which they throw partly over their shoulders and partly twist in folds round their head." We do not, however, get any specific reference to the dress worn by the people of Mithilā. Probably they wore the same types of dresses which were worn by men and women of Magadhā. In the

59 K. A., II, 22, 1, II, 23, 2, II, 25, 41, II, 29, 1, II, 31, 106, II, 31, 112, 12, 13, 102-113, II, 31, 114; JESSOP., IV, pt. I, pp. 57, 58.

60 Senha, B. P. (Ed.), *Comp. Hist. of Bihar*, vol. I, pt. I, p. 687.

61 K. A. II., II, 107-111.

62 Megasthenes, *Classical Accounts of India*, p. 230.

ornaments, the dress represented for the Fanti nation, Ashigany nation.
* Terracotta figurines from Benin history, Katsina and Vaudé and various other
people in the region. The nation wear a shell-like lower garment and an
upper white garment wears a shell-like lower garment. The upper part of the
body of the nation is however bare. The terracotta figurines show the use
of shell by girls. * Thus it may be suggested that the people of Ntchik also
use almost similar dresses in the Hausaland people.

Kan'ya refers to ornaments of gold, silver and precious stones to be worn by people on different parts of the body.⁶⁰ Rich people adorned themselves with ornaments if they had decorated their wrists and upper arms with bracelets of gold. Inexpensives wore ear ornaments which were ear-tugs. Probably different types of necklaces, ear-rings, bangles and girdles were used by the people in this period.⁶¹ Kan'ya has given a list of various types of ornaments which were manufactured under the supervision of *Tsurugashiyoko*. There are references to the work done from one string of beads to one diamond and eight strings of pearls, rubies, etc., with jewels or without them. Some of the important terms were *shira*, *tsurugashiyoko*, *indomobango*, *yajigashimada*, *adara*, *shidashi*, *tsurugashiyoko* and *senchiku*.⁶² It is interesting to note in our documents that most of these terms occur in the title songs and literature of Amida, particularly in the *Goma Retanaru* which may indicate that these ornaments were worn by the people of Amida in the Muromachi period. It is somewhat disappointing that no one like Shintani and Magarita agrees our view contrary to it.

Paradigmatic examples of the existence of the spiritual authority and its power was that it was under the control of the State. The authors of the Scriptures

b) Sabay, B. H., Indian Cow Camp and Ora pp. 4, 14 After A S and Lumber V.
N. J. Forester Excavation Rep. p 11

6 **A** **I** **n**

b3. Majumdar *Consolidated Accounts of India* pp. 305, 310.

6. \mathbb{R}^n 上のベクトル場 X が \mathbb{R}^n の任意の点 p で $X(p) = 0$ となることを示す。

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47) Schmitt, *Origins of the Enslaved Sea*, p. 41.

also given in these literary works and literary accounts by comparing them with the archaeological evidences. But the works of Jyotishana Kavaklasa, viṣṇu and Vidyapati which are regarded as the oldest works in the Maithili language throw considerable light on the life and culture of the people of this region, but they were written some times in the 15th and 16th centuries A. D. However, they corroborate the evidences of the Gupta and post-Gupta and Pala-Sena periods regarding the arts and ornaments, and as such it may be suggested that these accounts include even the dress and ornaments worn by the people of the Maithili region.

The *Aśvatar* or⁷⁹ *tarikā* various types of cloth such as *ruḍa*—*kyāva* *phāṭa*—black cloth, *saṁdya*—silk, *saṁdya*—cloth made by animal's hair, *āṣṭarpa*—wild silk or silk spun by the insects feeding on the leaves of Banyan and *saṁdya*, *maṁṁa*—*kaṣabha* silk, *seṁṁa*—smooth and shining cloth, *chandrānā*—silk from China, *trāṁṁṁ*—silk produced from a kind of insect *gūḍā*—linen or cotton cloth, *saṁdya* and *phāṭa*.

Kaṁḍila is also said to be of the Maithili region as it is a geographical matter.⁸⁰ However, it is almost certain that he was well acquainted with the state of Bihar as he refers to Aśoka, Vāṭika and Bhagvalla in frequently in his works. Probably Vāṭika or Maithilī was a prosperous city in his time.⁸¹ He knew about the Hoṣi river and refers to it as 'Aśoka-koṣi prapala'.⁸² Kaṁḍila was witness to Maithilī as he was a son of an important minister and so he that he has a good knowledge of the life and culture of the people of Maithilī matters like as we can easily judge of the life and culture from the descriptions of dress and ornaments referred to in our works may be applicable even to the people of his region. Like the *Aśvatar* the works of Kaṁḍila also contain various types of clothing materials. They have been adorned by different terms but it seems that wool, silk, cotton, and hemp were general sources for manufacturing them. There were various types of dresses and different materials

79 *Aśv* II. 8. 13-14. 1.

80 *Kaṁ* Chāṁḍila, P. 1. *Maṁ* G. S. P. 24.

81 *Maṁ* VI. 32-36, pp. 11-16.

82 *Kaṁ* VI. 11, p. 256.

for different occasions. Further there are numerous references to the various kinds of coloured garments such as white, blue, red, saffron and black¹² as well as, however, preferred as against other varieties of cloth. The dress¹³ of male persons generally comprised of three pieces of cloth, namely, *amrita* (upper garment, i. e. *amrita* & lower garment) and *saṅgā* or *amrita* head-dress, while the female dress consisted of *amrita* or *amrita* (i. e. *amrita* lower garment, *amrita*, *amrita* or *amrita* upper garment like *brahmā*, *amrita* or *brahmā* over. Generally the head was adorned by one sort of the lower garment by *amrita* or *amrita* uniforms as shown the use of *amrita* and *amrita* which was a long piece of cloth something like *amrita*. It was an important item of the bride's attire. There was a separate wedding dress for the bridegroom. The dresses of the monks were saffron-coloured garments made up of the *amrita* or *amrita*.

Besides the clothing materials *Amrita* refers to various types of upper and lower garments. The *Amrita* and the *Amrita* also throw considerable light on these aspects of life. These passages also refer to the use of three pieces of garments, namely upper and lower garments and a head-dress.

The *Amrita* mentions the name of the *amrita* which were manufactured but the name of *amrita* is not given. The *Amrita* also contains references to different types of cloths and garments but there is nothing about *amrita*.

In the *Amrita* of *Amrita* there is an interesting reference to the display of such textile materials in the palace of *Amrita* at the time of the marriage ceremony of his sister *Amrita*. It included *amrita* (flowers), *amrita* (clothes), *amrita*, *amrita* and *amrita* (vehicles) etc. Further there are references

¹² *Amrita* IX. 43, *Amrita* I. 1, *Amrita* III. 54, *Amrita* IV. 14, *Amrita* VI. 3, *Amrita* XV. 77.

¹³ *Amrita* XXV. 43, *Amrita* 41, *Amrita* 42, *Amrita* 41, *Amrita* 9, *Amrita* IV. 14 and *Amrita* 13, *Amrita* 10, *Amrita* 17, 7, 4, 8, *Amrita* 3, 6.

¹⁴ *Amrita* 18.

¹⁵ *Amrita* VII. 3.

¹⁶ *Amrita* pp. 11, 12, 214.

maṇḍamāṇḍa, āṇḍamāṇḍa and āṇḍa while Bāṇa⁹⁸ mentions them by the terms chūṇḍamāṇḍa, laṇḍiṇḍa maṇḍa and maṇḍamāṇḍa / maṇḍaliṇḍa. Kāṇḍiṇḍa⁹⁹ mentions ṇḍaṇḍa, āṇḍa and ṇḍaṇḍa as hand ornaments too. Bāṇa¹⁰⁰ refers to them by the term ṇḍamāṇḍa only. The Samachārīnī of Abhinavabhaṭṭa¹⁰¹ however has used the term ṇḍamāṇḍa for the hand ornament. In fact they appear to be different varieties of hand ornaments. Kāṇḍiṇḍa¹⁰² describes the wrist ornaments by the terms maṇḍaliṇḍa, ṇḍamāṇḍa and tāṇḍa but Bāṇa mentions only ṇḍamāṇḍa and tāṇḍa¹⁰³. According to Kāṇḍiṇḍa¹⁰⁴ ṇḍamāṇḍa and ṇḍamāṇḍa were the two varieties of leg ornaments but Bāṇa¹⁰⁵ adds two more pos of the ornaments namely pādāṇḍamāṇḍa and āṇḍamāṇḍa. The finger ornament was however called maṇḍa or āṇḍiṇḍa¹⁰⁶. The variations in the name of the ornaments were probably because of the differences in the regional languages.

We have some authentic records of the cultural life of the people of Bithur from 300 A. D. onwards, when this region came under the Karmāṇḍa and the Oṇḍamāṇḍa. Iṇḍaṇḍa Bhakṭa, author of the Bhagavadgītā early 4th century A. D. and Vidyāraṇḍa author of the Śaṇḍar, the Śaṇḍar, the Śaṇḍar, 15th century A. D. throw interesting side light on the dress and ornament of the people of Bithur. They were adepts of Tāṇḍa and north Bithur and wore in the language of Bithur. They are regarded as great personalities of Odia and great collectors of lost glory. Their works are considered to be the most authentic source material for the study of the life and culture of the people of Bithur. While describing the meeting place of the hero Jyotsnāraṇḍa¹⁰⁷ says that it was ravished with a lot of work spread

98. *Harṇa*, Pūṇḍa, 52-4. And. (Ed. P. V. Kane), para 13-7, 191.

99. *Raghu* VI. 14. *Kṛ. V. 1*, 174-1; *Kṛ. 13* 64; *Har. 11* 6, *Raghu* XVI 50. And. P. V. Kane, VII. 89, *Keyṇa*.

100. *Harṇa* (Pūṇḍa) pp. 31, 170. And. (Ed. P. V. Kane), paras 31-32, 171, 192.

101. *Raghu* XI. 92-9, XII. 166-67.

102. *Rig. L.* 20; *Kṛ. 1* 31; *Raghu* VI. 43.

103. *Harṇa* (Pūṇḍa) 13-14; *Kṛ. P. V. Kane*, paras 137-138.

104. *Raghu* VII. 63, *Kṛ. 1* 34, *Rig. 111* 27.

105. *Harṇa* (Pūṇḍa) 13-14; *Kṛ. P. V. Kane*, paras 142, 191.

106. *Śaṇḍar* I. 22, VI. 47; *Harṇa*, 263, 321.

107. *P. R.*, p. 11, 12, 14, 16.

very high quality of textile is manufactured. The Kikwisi people, a Hamar people, have a great reputation. They produce cotton silk and wooden cloth.

Viviparus has also given a detailed description of different types of dresses worn by different grades of people of the Mbulu region. These details are confirmed by the folk songs now current in Mbulu. A very white young girl met her lover generally wore either a white silk (*shandira*) or a black silk and *shandira* *shandira* is a white silk skirt (*shandira*).¹³⁵ Sometimes *shandira* dresses were also worn *shandira*. Rukidi also wore a blue *shandira* (*shandira*) or yellow silk and *shandira* is a white *shandira* dress was probably a skirt and blouse (*shandira*).¹³⁶ The dresses worn by women were a white skirt wide, young women not married *shandira*.¹³⁷ Once Kikwisi appeared in the garb of a widowed girl to make the people who were still *shandira*.¹³⁸ This shows that even at that time there was no distinction between a girl and a widow. Viviparus also refers to *shandira* dresses. He says that *shandira* dresses were white *shandira*.¹³⁹ The folk songs actually describe the actual marital status of the people and on this count the famous poet Dikwisi is rightly observed that *shandira* *shandira* *shandira* leaves and folk songs are some of the remarkable features of the Mbulu region.¹⁴⁰ They throw much light on the dress and ornaments of this region. These songs reveal that men wore *shandira* *shandira* or *shandira* and a *shandira* *shandira* *shandira*. However, one of the songs described that *shandira* was a girl's skirt at the time of her marriage.¹⁴¹ The bride wore yellow *shandira* and a *shandira* *shandira* *shandira*.¹⁴² The young ladies also wore yellow *shandira* and all women wore *shandira*.¹⁴³ The dress

135 Bhatia and Joshi. *Viviparus and Other Folklore*, p. 154, 222, 235.

136 Ibid. p. 21.

137 Bhatia and Joshi. *Viviparus and Other Folklore*, pp. 123, 135.

138 Ibid. p. 492.

139 Ibid. 493.

140 Ibid. p. 130.

141 Joshi, Han Ekka. *Mbulu, Lulu Gera*, p. 35, Rakodi 1.

142 Ibid. p. 28.

143 Rakodi. *Mbulu Folklore*, p. 156.

144 Ibid. p. 17.

[illegible]

The *Larousse* further gives the description of the accessories worn by different classes of people. The prostitutes¹⁰ wore various kinds of ornaments to attract people. The noble ladies¹¹ wore attractive dresses, long, low-cut, light-colored, fitted, having rings & brooches, chains, hair-pins, bouquets, fans and similar things while the dancers¹² wore baggy short-hand-sleeved dresses, girdle ornaments, catenae, bracelets, anklets etc. The traders and merchants¹³ were expert in carrying the different varieties of precious and semi-precious stones like diamonds, hard gem stones, ruby, emerald, pearl, garnet, silver, lapis lazuli, copper, iron, etc. as well as gold, turquoise, coral, glass, pearls, etc. It also mentions the colors as favored in the dress of girls.

[illegible]

50 f. n. p. 21.

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• **Neuripon, H.**

62: Mishra, Balakrishna. *Machete: Makhdoon's Poly-Space Theater*. pp. 14, 20-24.

Mishra⁶⁷ also informed us that just east of Bankapur, villages of Khatka and Jura of Sursi were very popular among the women of Almorah.

Thus various types of dress and ornaments are referred to in the works of Jyotiraj, Lakshma and Acharya. The practice of wearing different types of dresses and ornaments continued even after the age of Vasupata. The present life and customs of Mishra community in spinning and weaving still carried on a large scale by the people of this region. Even now there is a village called Bhauara where more than 100 weavers are engaged in weaving. There are also many other villages in the districts of Barhbarua, Sonantapur, Bapatpur and Purnea where spinning and weaving work is continuing. They manufacture bed-sheets, saris, dhoti, towels, curtains, shawls, ladies' cloth, saree, etc. as many other varieties of silk. Khatka is a special variety of saree which is produced in the Mishra region. It is grown in cotton and after finishing it looks like silk. The Mishra has a history where saree is made. According to Dr. Mahapatra⁶⁸ some more interesting facts are known by the collection weaving since on previous occasions in different parts of the Purnea district, but the industry is now dying out. Cotton carpets and blankets are also manufactured by the people of this region. Dr. Francis Buchanan⁶⁹ observed that in the district of Monghyr much of the army clothing were made in the 19th century A. D. for which a large number of looms were employed. The ladies of Bhauara⁷⁰ were expert in drawing artistic designs on the cloth with shell and other objects and with lacquer paint a red design on the white fabric at the innermost. Further, very fine variety of silk and a piece of silk for months are manufactured in the district of Bhagalpur. Now a few government powerlooms are also functioning in these districts particularly at Madhubani, Lohariaura and Bhagalpur under the Bihar State Handloom Commission.

66 Roy Choudhury, P. C. *Ind. Soc. Darbhanga*, p. 231-32.

67 Roy Choudhury, P. C. *Ind. Soc. Purnea*, p. 241.

68 Roy Choudhury, P. C. *Ind. Soc. Almorah*, p. 64.

69 *Ind. Soc. Purnea*, p. 34.

70 *Ind. Soc. Purnea*, p. 231.

71 Roy Choudhury, P. C. *Ind. Soc. Purnea*, p. 111.

The male dress,¹⁷¹ now generally consists of a shirt or *kurtā* of muslin or silk, a pair of trousers or a *payjama* or a *dhuti*; while at home they wear a *dhuti* or a *lungi* or *payjama* or a sleeping suit etc. Thus the peculiar Malihila dress is on the decline. Now-a-days many persons wear a Gandhi cap of cotton in place of *paga*, Jawahar-cum handi or waist coat as an upper garment. The educated person, however, go out in a pair of trousers or *payjama* and a shirt with a hat on or bareheaded and with a walking stick. They also wear bush-shirts. The well-to-do people of Malihila now wear *Payjama* and a long shirt or *kurtā* or a pair of short pant and a shirt, the two flaps of the shirt being allowed to hang loose on the shorts or being tucked inside them. Sometimes they wear a pair of trousers in combination with a shirt or a half shirt or a bush-shirt. The shirt is tucked underneath the trousers and its sleeves may be rolled up in a band above the elbow. Some persons wear western suit including trousers, shirt, a waist coat and a necktie. On ceremonial occasions they wear *sherwani* or *achkan* or long coat or prince-coat. It is interesting to note that even Muslims who have settled there wear similar dresses, however, their common garment is *payjama* or *dhuti* as lower garment and shirt or *kurtā* as upper garment.

The Malihila Brahmins wear a *dhuti* shirt, *kurtā*, *kurta*, *chādara*, or *mita* and keep a *gamachhi* or *umchi* on his shoulder, *āshu* *paga* over his head and shoes. The peculiar head dress called *paga*, a twisted or folded *chādara* worn over the upper part of the body in a peculiar manner, an *achkan* or a long loose *kurtā* with *dhuti* mark out a Malihila *pandita*. But in orthodox Brahmins still wears the prescribed dress. In the urban areas the Malihila dress is going out and the *pāgas* are used generally on ceremonial occasions. The changed dress like half pant, full pant, under-wear, gajra, shirt, *kurtā*, *dhuti*, *payjama*, long coat, coat etc. have crept in to their daily use. The middle class wear clothes of the same variety as those worn by the rich person. The labouring and agricultural class¹⁷² are not so neat and clean in their dress because of their poor financial condition.

171 Ibid., p. 111.

172 Any Chaudhary, P. C., *B.M. Gaz. Darbhanga*, p. 114.

The dress of women¹⁷⁴ differs from urban to rural areas. In Mithali women wear a sari in a peculiar manner. First of all they wear an undergarment called petticoat tied to waist near the navel. Then they wear sari. It is tucked round the waist in a peculiar manner. The peculiarity lies in the manner of tucking the pleats (*haskid*). The pleats are tucked near the navel on the left side of the waist and one end of the sari (*shishala*) covers the head. The mode of wearing a sari is common in the rural areas. In the urban areas the sari is worn in the more customary manner. It is tied round the waist with pleats tucked at the navel and one end of it (*shishala*) covers the head. Previously females wore a *chali* (a tight short blouse without braiders) but now *chali* has been replaced by modern type of blouse with short or long sleeves. The use of braiders has become very common. Some women, however, simply wear a braider or short blouse and cover their body with the help of their sari. Short tight blouse with low-cut neck, and close fitting sleeves up to the elbow or sometimes sleeveless revealing the region about the lower ribs is coming into fashion.

The boys¹⁷⁵ wear shirt, *kurti*, *gajjer*, *pyjama*, half pant, bush shirt etc. Previously they wore a *langesi*, a lion cloth, a *gajjer* or a *kurti* but it has now changed.

The girls¹⁷⁶ wear a frock, *janghi*, *chalmar*, *ghaghra*, blouse etc. but the grown up girls wear sari, petticoat, blouse, *chalmar*, frock, *depatis* etc. Now they have started wearing bush-shirt and trousers or *pyjama*.

Various types of ornaments¹⁷⁷ were worn by the ladies of Mithali but now it is decreasing. Formerly the ornaments were used even by male persons. There is a wide difference between ornaments used by the urban and the rural people as also by the rich and the poor. There is difference in the types and designs of ornaments as used by men and women and by boys and girls. Aristocratic ladies in the urban areas wear delicate ornaments of gold and per-

174 *Ibid.* pp. 11-112.

175 Ray Chaudhary, P. C., *Ind. Cos. Soc.*, p. 112.

176 *Ibid.*

177 *Ibid.* p. 112.

diamonds but rich ladies in the villages wear mostly solid gold ornaments but for the feet they use silver ornaments. Poor women, however, wear ornaments of silver and brass.

The male persons¹⁷⁷ wear chain (sikari), ring (angul), amulet (amala). The Mithila Brāhmanas wear round ring of gold (kamati). But now the fashion of wearing ornaments by men is declining. 'The female folk'¹⁷⁸ were mangtika or pika on the head; bati, sikari, karpas, jhanki, karpala, kamati on the ears; makhi, belahi, mathi, karpaga ka phari on the nose, nika (kanti), sikari (chain), mataramala, necklace, chakari, karpas, kamati on the neck; kadi, katori, amala, badi, raji on the hands; dandak and kamadhani on the waist; papala, kadi-chakara on the feet and angul on the fingers. The children¹⁷⁹ wear bati, chain and light badi.

Thus we may conclude that Mithila is really very rich and prosperous part of the State of Bihar. It has definitely a rich cultural heritage.



177 Roy Choudhury, P. C., *Dist. Gov. Ser.*, p. 111

178 *Ibid.*

179 *Ibid.*

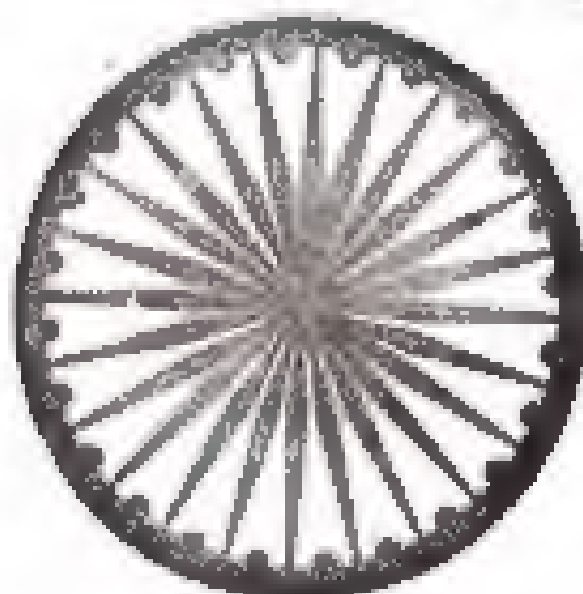
THE JOURNAL
OF THE
BIHAR RESEARCH SOCIETY
L. N. MISHRA COMMEMORATION VOLUME

Vol. LXIII-LXIV

1985-1986

Chief Editor
Professor Upendra Thakur

Editor-in-Charge
Dr. K. K. Munda



PUBLISHED BY
THE BIHAR RESEARCH SOCIETY
PATNA